



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS  
2000 NAVY PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON DC 20350-2000

OPNAVINST 7220.7H  
N13F  
8 Nov 2018

OPNAV INSTRUCTION 7220.7H

From: Chief of Naval Operations

Subj: FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY BONUS PROGRAM

Ref: (a) 37 U.S.C. §353  
(b) DoD Instruction 1340.27 of 21 May 2013  
(c) OPNAVINST 5200.37

Encl: (1) Foreign Language Proficiency Bonus Procedures  
(2) Foreign Language Proficiency Bonus Criteria  
(3) Extension of Certification

1. Purpose

a. To provide policy and establish procedures for the administration and payment of the foreign language proficiency bonus (FLPB). This instruction serves as the fundamental information source for Active Component (AC) and Reserve Component (RC) personnel regarding FLPB and prescribes individual and command responsibilities relative to the program.

b. There are several major changes in this instruction revision.

(1) Introduces an explicit caution that the FLPB is a special pay, subject to change or discontinuation, and, as such, should not be counted on as a consistent source of income.

(2) Provides greater detail on the FLPB administration and execution processes.

(3) Navy-established FLPB criteria are listed as possible practices vice standard policies so Navy may employ these practices to shape language capacity, but retain the flexibility to adjust the policy as necessary to support mission requirements.

c. This instruction has been revised substantially and should be reviewed in its entirety.

2. Cancellation. OPNAVINST 7220.7G.

3. Background. The objective of the FLPB is to increase and maintain sufficient foreign language and dialect capabilities in the Navy. Specifically, the FLPB:

a. encourages Sailors with foreign language and dialect proficiencies to test and identify their proficiency levels;

b. increases the number of language professionals operating at proficiency levels of 3 and higher as defined by the Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) scale (available at <http://www.govtilr.org/>) in languages and dialects of strategic importance to Navy and the Department of Defense (DoD); and

c. incentivizes Sailors to acquire, sustain, and improve foreign language and dialect skills.

#### 4. Scope and Applicability

a. FLPB is authorized by references (a) and (b) for AC and RC personnel, who meet eligibility requirements prescribed in this instruction. Acceptance of FLPB constitutes acknowledgement of the recipient's eligibility for deployment or reassignment in language-related duties as required.

b. Foreign language proficiency pay for civilians is not addressed in this instruction. More information on civilian foreign language proficiency pay may be found in local command instructions or in DoD Instruction 1400.25, volume 2016, DoD Civilian Personnel Management System: Administration of Foreign Language Pay for Defense Civilian Intelligence Personnel System (DCIPS) Employees, of 15 June 2015.

5. Responsibilities. Navy's senior language authority, Director, Navy Language, Regional Expertise, and Culture Office (OPNAV N13F), is responsible for the overall management of the FLPB program and provides policy guidance and oversight for the program. Procedures for execution of FLPB can be found in enclosure (1). OPNAV N13F advises Director, Military Personnel Plans and Policy Division (OPNAV N13) on this program.

##### a. OPNAV N13F

(1) Implement FLPB policy consistent with references (a) and (b).

(2) Shape Navy's FLPB program to build language capabilities in support of the warfighter and Navy's mission, to the extent allowed by references (a) and (b).

(3) Submit to the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness any requests for exceptions to DoD FLPB policy.

(4) Provide written guidance on FLPB implementation for circumstances not covered in this instruction. Enclosure (2) outlines FLPB criteria commonly employed in Navy.

##### b. Section Head, Strategy, Policy, and Requirements Section (OPNAV N13F1)

(1) Analyze language requirements and the self-assessed and tested language capability in the force. Based on results of capability analysis, OPNAV N13F1 must:

(a) review and provide input to development of the DoD strategic language list (SLL) in coordination with Navy language, regional expertise, and culture stakeholders;

(b) at least annually, review Navy's SLL and, in coordination with Navy language, regional expertise, and culture stakeholders, recommend SLL changes to the Navy senior language authority when warranted;

(c) at least annually, review FLPB implementation policy and recommend updates to the Navy senior language authority when warranted; and

(d) draft written guidance for FLPB implementation.

(2) Adjudicate requests for FLPB, extensions of certification, and exceptions to FLPB policy to include processing and responding to waiver requests and adjudicating FLPB entitlement disputes.

(3) Serve as the subject matter expert for FLPB policy.

c. FLPB Program Analyst (OPNAV N13F2)

(1) Develop annual and Future Years Defense Program budget requirements for FLPB.

(2) Determine pay entitlement.

(3) Start, stop, or change pay entitlements as necessary for Sailors eligible for FLPB under this instruction.

(4) Initiate recoupment actions as necessary.

d. Commanding Officers, Officers in Charge, or Equivalent Organizational Leaders

(1) Assess requirements for language capability and code billets accordingly.

(2) Review and validate AC and RC language-coded billets contained in authorized manning documents regularly and adjust as necessary.

(3) Encourage Sailors who profess language capability to measure their proficiency and determine eligibility for FLPB by taking a Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT).

(4) Ensure Sailors receiving FLPB are aware that as a special pay, it is subject to change or discontinuation and should not be counted on as a consistent source of income.

(5) Inform OPNAV N13F at least 60 days in advance if a Sailor's eligibility for FLPB will expire during assignment to a location where language testing is not available. All requests for extension of certification must be submitted under the policies in reference (c) and as outlined in enclosure (3).

(6) Inform OPNAV N13F at least 60 days in advance if a Sailor's eligibility for FLPB will expire during enrollment in a language enhancement event. All requests for extension of certification must be submitted under the policies in reference (c) and as outlined in enclosure (3).

(7) Ensure fleet administrative officers, personnel support activities and detachments, and Navy operational support centers forward FLPB action requests to OPNAV N13F. Only OPNAV N13F, in coordination with Commander, Naval Reserve Forces Command for RC members, has authority to affect FLPB pay changes.

e. Sailors

(1) Make known their professed language abilities and, when appropriate, take a DLPT to measure their proficiency and determine eligibility for FLPB.

(2) If granted FLPB, test using the DLPT system of tests as outlined in the policies of reference (c) and this instruction to qualify for continued receipt of FLPB.

(3) Notify OPNAV N13F2 upon detachment from their billets, in cases where FLPB is contingent upon assignment to a particular billet or unit identification code.

(4) Be aware that FLPB is a special pay and is subject to change or discontinuation.

6. Procedures. Specific procedures for FLPB eligibility, proficiency certification, and FLPB execution can be found in enclosure (1).

7. Coordination. The Chief of Naval Operations coordinator for the FLPB program is OPNAV N13F, located at:


Navy Language, Regional Expertise, and Culture Office  
OPNAV N13F  
701 South Courthouse Road  
Building 12, Room 3K030  
Arlington, VA 22204

8. Records Management

a. Records created as a result of this instruction, regardless of format or media, must be maintained and dispositioned for the standard subject identification codes 1000 through 13000 series per the records disposition schedules located on the Department of the Navy/Assistant for Administration (DON/AA), Directives and Records Management Division (DRMD) portal page at <https://portal.secnav.navy.mil/orgs/DUSNM/DONAA/DRM/Records-and-Information-Management/Approved%20Record%20Schedules/Forms/AllItems.aspx>.

b. For questions concerning the management of records related to this instruction or the records disposition schedules, please contact the local records manager or the DON/AA DRMD program office.

9. Review and Effective Date. Per OPNAVINST 5215.17A, Deputy Chief of Naval Operations (Manpower, Personnel, Training and Education) (CNO (N1)) will review this instruction annually around the anniversary of its issuance date to ensure applicability, currency, and consistency with Federal, DoD, Secretary of the Navy, and Navy policy and statutory authority using OPNAV 5215/40 Review of Instruction. This instruction will be in effect for 5 years, unless revised or cancelled in the interim, and will be reissued by the 5-year anniversary date if it is still required, unless it meets one of the exceptions in OPNAVINST 5215.17A, paragraph 10. If the instruction is no longer required, it will be processed for cancellation as soon as the cancellation is known following the guidance in OPNAV Manual 5215.1 of May 2016.



R. P. BURKE  
Deputy Chief of Naval Operations  
(Manpower, Personnel, Training  
and Education)

Releasability and distribution:

This instruction is cleared for public release and is available electronically only via Department of the Navy Issuances Web site, <http://doni.documentservices.dla.mil>

FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY BONUS PROCEDURES

1. Purpose. The purpose of this enclosure is to outline general procedures for FLPB eligibility, proficiency certification, and execution of FLPB.
2. Responsibility. OPNAV N13F2 is responsible for execution of the FLPB program.
3. Eligibility Requirements
  - a. FLPB is authorized for Sailors who are officially certified as proficient in one or more eligible foreign languages or dialects consistent with policies in reference (b).
  - b. In addition to the FLPB eligibility requirements directed in reference (b), OPNAV N13F reviews Navy-specific eligibility requirements annually or more often when necessary.
4. Proficiency Certification
  - a. To be eligible for FLPB, official certification of language proficiency is required under the policies of reference (b) and accomplished via the DLPT system of tests under the policies of reference (c).
  - b. Certification of proficiency for FLPB eligibility lasts for 1 year. Specifically, certification of language proficiency will expire 1 year from the first day of the first month after the previous certification date, unless the Sailor recertifies or an exception to policy is granted. Reference (c) and enclosure (3) contain relevant information on extension of proficiency certification.
  - c. Recertification earlier than the anniversary of certification date may affect the eligibility period and pay amount based on the new proficiency level.
5. Bonus Levels. Consistent with limits set in reference (a), FLPB must not exceed \$12,000 in a single year of certification. FLPB levels are paid under the provisions of reference (b) and authorized for one or more languages. FLPB may be disbursed in monthly installments for both the AC and RC personnel.
6. Bonus Level Computation. Consistent with the policies in reference (b), FLPB payment levels are determined by proficiency level and the specific language or languages in which proficiency is achieved. To the extent allowable under reference (b), Navy may implement additional FLPB payment criteria, which are generally described in enclosure (2).
  - a. Proficiency Level. Official certification of language proficiency is required for FLPB eligibility and achieved via the DLPT system of tests. These tests, which consist of computer or Web-based tests, oral proficiency interviews, or other DoD-approved, standardized, foreign

language tests that measure proficiency, must be taken consistent with the policies in reference (c). Using these tests, foreign language proficiency can be measured in three modalities: listening (L), reading (R), and speaking (S). A DLPT measures listening and reading proficiency, while an oral proficiency interview measures speaking proficiency. OPNAV N13F determines which modalities are required for certification to the extent allowed under reference (b) and based on community requirements.

b. Language. Navy pays FLPB to Sailors with certified proficiency in designated languages consistent with policies in reference (b).

c. Payment Amount. Navy pays FLPB at levels directed in reference (b) and utilizes flexibility in FLPB payment levels to shape its FLPB program as necessary to incentivize desired competencies in support of mission requirements.

#### 7. Start and Stop of FLPB Payments

a. OPNAV N13F2 receives data from Navy and DoD systems to determine FLPB pay entitlement and executes FLPB pay actions to start, stop, or change FLPB entitlements based on these data.

b. Sailors and commands are not required to submit requests to start FLPB, unless requesting FLPB for contingency operations or atypical duties, which would not be evident through personnel systems alone.

(1) Contingency FLPB is described in subparagraph 2c of enclosure (2).

(2) Commands must forward to OPNAV N13F requests for approval of contingency FLPB payment.

(3) All requests must be on command letterhead, properly serialized, signed by the commanding officer or designated representative "By direction" and must include either endorsed orders or liquidated travel claim. An example of a request for contingency FLPB is provided below after paragraph 9.

(4) For approved requests, contingency FLPB will be paid in a lump sum upon completion of the contingency or other qualifying operation or event, based on the length of time of language usage.

c. FLPB starts on the date of qualifying certification. FLPB generally is authorized for up to 12 months.

d. Where FLPB eligibility is based on a Sailor's assignment to a language-coded billet, FLPB will be stopped when the billet is vacated. It is incumbent upon the Sailor to notify OPNAV N13F2 upon detachment from the billet. Failure to do so may result in overpayment, which may be recouped.

8. Erroneous Payment of FLPB. If FLPB is granted erroneously, recoupment procedures may be initiated, either by OPNAV N13F or Commander, Naval Reserve Forces Command, as required.

9. FLPB Queries. Questions about FLPB entitlements or eligibility requirements not addressed in references (a) and (b) should be directed to OPNAV N13F. OPNAV N13F can be reached via telephone at (703) 604-6220 and via e-mail at [ALTN\\_N13F1@navy.mil](mailto:ALTN_N13F1@navy.mil).



[COMMAND LETTERHEAD]

7220  
Ser N00/xxx  
DD Mmm YY

From: Commanding Officer, [Unit]  
To: Navy Language, Regional Expertise, and Culture Office (OPNAV N13F)  
Subj: REQUEST FOR CONTINGENCY FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY BONUS  
Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 7220.7H

Encl: (1) Defense Language Proficiency Test Results dated DD Mmm YYYY  
(2) Group Entitlement List [*only if more than one individual is being submitted via a single request*]

1. I am requesting foreign language proficiency bonus (FLPB) payment for language use during contingency or other Navy operation as outlined in reference (a). The following information is provided [*for each member for whom the FLPB is requested*]:

- a. Full Name:
- b. Rating or designator and paygrade:
- d. Language(s) used:
- e. Start date: DD Mmm YY
- f. Stop date: DD Mmm YY
- g. Situation and impact of Sailor's linguistic skills on the mission: [*describe use*].

2. My point of contact for this matter is [*Name, phone, e-mail*].

SIGNATURE BLOCK

FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY BONUS CRITERIA

1. Purpose. The purpose of this enclosure is to list circumstances where Navy may pay the FLPB to Sailors who meet eligibility requirements. These criteria are supplementary to the FLPB levels prescribed in reference (b).

2. Bonus Criteria. Under references (a) and (b), Navy has some flexibility to shape its FLPB program. Navy establishes FLPB criteria to incentivize critical language skills and targeted proficiency levels and to identify and document language capabilities in the force.

a. Language-coded Billets

(1) Navy may pay FLPB to Sailors in billets coded for language, if they meet all other FLPB eligibility requirements. Sailors must test and maintain official certification of proficiency at ILR level 2 or above in two modalities consistent with the provisions for official language testing in reference (c).

(2) Sailors who meet eligibility requirements for FLPB payment based on assignment to a language-coded billet are required to contact OPNAV N13F2 upon transfer from the qualifying billet. Failure to do so may result in overpayment, which may be recouped.

b. Language Professionals. Navy may pay FLPB to Sailors defined as language professionals (i.e., cryptologic technicians interpretive and foreign area officers) with certification of proficiency in any language listed on the SLL or for languages identified as community requirements based on coded billets or regional alignment.

(1) Language professionals must achieve minimum qualifying scores of 2 to be eligible for pay. When warranted by changes in community standards, FLPB eligibility requirements may be adjusted to incentivize higher proficiency achievement or targeted language groups (e.g., incentivizing skill in one or more languages related to an assigned region).

(2) Graduated FLPB pay levels, as established under reference (b), vary based on the category of the language in which proficiency is certified and may apply to the practices outlined in this subparagraph 2b section.

c. Contingency Operations and Atypical Duties. Navy may pay contingency FLPB to Sailors who do not require language skill in the performance of their regular, primary duties, but use their language capabilities in support of contingency operations or other Navy requirements.

(1) To be eligible, Sailors must provide documentation of language usage and official certification of proficiency at ILR level 1+ or above achieved through official language testing consistent with the provisions in reference (c).

(a) The most efficient and reliable method for documentation of language utilization is to include the requirement for language skill in a Sailor's orders.

(b) Sailors without a language requirement in orders must provide documentation of language usage via an official request for contingency FLPB. Enclosure (1) outlines the process for requesting contingency FLPB and contains a sample request letter.

(c) Sailors without current, official certification of proficiency in the language(s) utilized, must test within 90 days of completion of the operation or period in which their language skill was utilized.

(2) Language professionals may be eligible for contingency FLPB under the provisions of subparagraph 2c of enclosure (2), but only if they achieve proficiency of level 2/2 or higher in the language utilized, and they are not entitled to FLPB for the utilized language regularly.

(3) Contingency FLPB is not intended as an alternative to properly coding billets with identified language requirements. As such, contingency FLPB is not authorized for greater than 180 days. This provides sufficient time for submission of billet change requests, as necessary.

d. Expeditionary FLPB. Navy may pay FLPB to Sailors assigned to special operations or expeditionary forces for certified language skills at level 1 or higher on the ILR scale.

(1) Languages that are prevalent in the force are not eligible for expeditionary FLPB payments under this subparagraph 2d section. Languages are considered prevalent in the force when sufficient capability to meet documented requirements exists in the force.

(2) Sailors eligible for expeditionary FLPB may include:

(a) all designators and ratings assigned to the Naval Special Warfare Command;

(b) Sailors assigned to the Navy Expeditionary Combat Command, regardless of designator or rating, and includes individual augmentees under the administrative oversight of the Expeditionary Combat Readiness Center for the duration of that assignment;

(c) Sailors assigned to the Fleet Marine Force and Health Services Augmentation Program, officer or enlisted, regardless of designator or rating; and

(d) Sailors assigned to the Afghanistan-Pakistan Hands Program, regardless of designator or rating, for the duration of the assignment.

(3) Sailors and commands are not required to submit requests for approval of expeditionary FLPB. OPNAV N13F2 verifies scores and unit identification codes and

authorizes FLPB payment. FLPB pay may be continued for the duration of a Sailor's assignment provided recertification is completed as required and eligibility requirements are met.

e. Initial Acquisition Graduates. Sailors who graduate from the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center or other DoD-approved acquisition course that is comparable to a Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center initial acquisition course in length, content, and graduation standard, may be eligible for FLPB if they meet all other FLPB eligibility requirements consistent with the provisions of this instruction.

(1) FLPB for initial acquisition graduates may be paid regardless of billet coding, rating, or community, as long as all other eligibility requirements are met.

(2) Questions on whether a language course qualifies under the provisions of this subparagraph 2e section should be addressed to OPNAV N13F.

f. One-time Testing Bonus. For capability in select languages not usually eligible for regular FLPB payments, Navy may pay a lump sum FLPB payment to Sailors who test and achieve a predetermined proficiency level.

(1) The purpose of the one-time testing bonus is to incentivize Sailors to test and measure their capability in languages not regularly incentivized via FLPB payments.

(2) OPNAV N13F will provide specific guidance on languages and required proficiency levels prior to implementation, when the one-time testing bonus is employed.

g. Midshipmen

(1) FLPB is not authorized for U.S. Naval Academy midshipmen. Because reference (a) specifically authorizes payment of the FLPB to Service members entitled to basic pay under section 204 of Title 37, U.S. Code (i.e., AC personnel), or compensation under section 206 of Title 37, U.S. Code (i.e., RC personnel), U.S. Naval Academy midshipmen are specifically excluded from FLPB eligibility.

(2) Reserve Officers Training Corps midshipmen may be eligible for FLPB if they are participants in an enlisted to officer commissioning program, continue to receive full pay and allowances for their enlisted paygrade, and meet all other eligibility requirements for FLPB outlined in this instruction.

3. FLPB Practices. Annually, or more often if necessary, OPNAV N13F will review Navy FLPB practices and publish revised procedures when necessary.

### EXTENSION OF CERTIFICATION

1. Purpose. The purpose of this enclosure is to provide information on extending proficiency certification for FLPB.

2. Background. Sailors must test annually in each language or dialect for which they are receiving FLPB in order to continue receipt unless they are recertified or granted an exception to policy under the conditions stipulated in this instruction. As Navy senior language authority, OPNAV N13F has the authority to extend certification of proficiency as necessary.

3. Proficiency Scores at or Above 3/3. For FLPB purposes, certification of proficiency at ILR skill levels 3/3, 3/3/3, or higher remains in effect for 2 years, in contrast to the standard expiration of certification, which occurs after 1 year. That is, Sailors who initially certify or recertify for FLPB at ILR skill levels 3/3, 3/3/3, or higher, are not required to recertify for 2 years from the date of the original qualifying test.

a. Extension of certification for FLPB purposes based on 3/3 and above proficiency levels is automatic. Commands are not required to request a waiver for extension of certification.

b. Sailors may have other requirements for more frequent language testing, such as fulfilling community testing requirements or adhering to professional standards for language testing. Therefore, the automatic extension of proficiency certification described in this paragraph section is applicable to FLPB eligibility and should not be confused with other mandatory testing requirements that may be levied outside of the provisions of this instruction.

4. Justification for Extension Requests. The most common reasons for requesting a waiver to extend proficiency certification are an inability to test and status as a student in language training. Subparagraphs 4a and 4b below outline specific eligibility requirements for these requests.

a. Inability to Test. A Sailor, who is assigned to duty in a location where language testing is not accessible or available, or where language testing is deemed unfeasible, may be eligible for a waiver to have his or her proficiency certification extended based on the inability to test. To be considered for an extension of proficiency certification based on an inability to test, the following in subparagraphs 4a(1) through 4a(5) apply.

(1) Sailors must have current, qualifying language proficiency scores before commencing the assignment where language testing is not available.

(2) Sailors must demonstrate that they did not have an opportunity to test prior to commencing the assignment where language testing is not available.

(a) In general, Sailors are only required to recertify for FLPB purposes annually. However, under reference (c) they may retest and recertify at any time as long as 180 days have passed since their last certification. Therefore, when more than 180 days have elapsed between their most recent certification date and assignment to a location where testing is not available, it demonstrates that they do have the opportunity to test and recertify ahead of time.

(b) Sailors will not be granted an extension under the provisions of this paragraph section if they have an opportunity to test but do not.

(c) Extenuating circumstances, such as short-fused deployments, will be considered by OPNAV N13F on a case-by-case basis.

(3) Commands must submit requests to extend certification due to an inability to test to OPNAV N13F for adjudication under reference (c). Refer to reference (c) for an example of a waiver request.

(4) Sailors who are granted a waiver to extend certification of proficiency must retest after completion of the operation or event that caused the inability to test.

(a) In the case of a Sailor with an approved waiver for extension of proficiency certification due to deployment for an official contingency operation, as defined in Joint Publication 1-02, Navy allows a grace period of 180 days to retest and recertify after completion of such a duty assignment.

(b) In the case of a Sailor with an approved waiver for extension of proficiency certification due to assignment where there is no access to testing that is not a contingency operation, Navy allows a grace period of 60 days to retest and recertify after completion of such a duty assignment.

(5) If a Sailor fails to retest and obtain the required certification by the end of the designated grace period, Navy may require the Sailor to repay all or a portion of the FLPB paid during the extension period.

b. Student Status. Sailors whose certification expires while they are attending a language enhancement event or significant language training event may be granted an extension of certification until after completion of the event.

(1) Sailors must have current, qualifying language proficiency scores before commencing the language training or education event to be considered for this extension.

(2) Sailors must demonstrate that they did not have an opportunity to test prior to commencing the language enhancement event or significant language training event.

(a) In general, Sailors are only required to recertify for FLPB purposes annually. However, under reference (c), they may retest and recertify at any time as long as 180 days have passed since their last certification. Therefore, when more than 180 days have elapsed between their most recent certification date and the start of the eligible language training, it demonstrates that they do have the opportunity to test and recertify ahead of time.

(b) Sailors will not be granted an extension under the provisions of this paragraph section if they have an opportunity to test but do not.

(c) Sailors and command language program managers should track FLPB eligibility and plan for language training to avoid requesting student status waivers.

(3) Commands must submit a request for a waiver to extend certification of proficiency due to student status using procedures outlined in reference (c) and this enclosure.

(4) Sailors who are granted a waiver to extend certification of proficiency must retest after completion of the language enhancement event or significant language training event. Navy allows a grace period of 60 days to retest and recertify after completion of the event.

(5) If a Sailor fails to retest and obtain the required certification by the end of the designated grace period, Navy may require the Sailor to repay all or a portion of the FLPB paid during the extension period.